

Overview

By Mary Erickson, Ph.D., with Arizona art teacher, Kathy David.

Family Matters is a three-lesson unit plan designed in conjunction with the Family Matters exhibition at the Gallery at Tempe Center for the Arts.

Preview the Family Matters exhibition [PowerPoint](#)

Themes

- *Theme in Life:* We are all influenced by our families.
- *Theme in Art:* Artworks can reveal complex and simple truths about families.

Key Questions

Lessons approach the themes through three key questions.



1. How do artists use rhythm to unify a complex composition?



2. How do artists use analogous (harmonious) colors to unify a complex composition?
3. How do artists express layers of meaning by juxtaposing (combining) images, and symbols?

Community Connections

Many towns and cities in Arizona are built on top of earlier settlements, which, in turn, sometimes are built on even earlier habitations. Archeologists dig down through layers built up over time to uncover evidence of those who lived here long ago. The canals of modern Phoenix retrace ancient Hohokam canals. Builders and developers sometimes accidentally discover artifacts from another time.

Families are a lot like cities, built up in layers over time. If we dig down into our memories or search for family artifacts, we sometimes discover important foundations we can build on today or maybe even a few things we would rather forget.

Lessons

One: [Layers in My Family \(pdf\)](#)

Two: [Family Rhythms \(pdf\)](#)

Three: [Family Layers \(pdf\)](#)

Resources

[Preview of Family Matters Exhibition PowerPoint](#)

[Layers in My Family PowerPoint](#)

[Exploring Family Rhythms at the Tempe Center for the Arts \(pdf\)](#)

[Family Layers PowerPoint](#)

[Questor Questions: Uncover Layers of Family History \(pdf\)](#)

Supplies

Essentials

- poster board or paper heavy enough to paint on.
- paint - whatever you have available (acrylics, watercolors, tempera, etc.)
- pencil
- magazines
- scissors
- glue sticks
- paint brushes
- markers or colored pencils for drawing and adding definition
- newspaper to cover work surface and to collage with.

Optional

- tissue paper
- starch for collaging tissue paper
- wire
- foam core
- linoleum pieces and cutters
- acetone, brayer, cotton balls for magazine image transfers
- old credit cards to use as palette knives
- templates and stencils
- sponges or toothbrushes for applying paint
- crayons for younger students

Credits

Kathy David and Mary Erickson for photos

Artists Lynette Andreasen and Stephen Marc for artwork images.

Estimated Time

Previsit Lesson = 20-40 minutes

TCA Visit Lesson = Field Trip

Postvisit Lesson = 300-750 minutes (At the secondary level, the time will vary depending on whether students make thumbnails in advance, students' prior knowledge of rhythm and analogous colors and degree of focus on experimental painting. At the elementary level, if students use simple media, such as markers or crayons, and you focus either on analogous colors or rhythm, not both, much less time will be required.)